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NEWS AND NOTES

MEETING OF THE ENGLISH SECTION OF THE TEXAS STATE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

The general topic of the program for the English section of the Texas State Teachers' Association, which met at Waco, Tex., December 28, 1911, was "The Teacher of English." Dr. L. W. Payne, Jr., of the University of Texas, was in the chair. Dr. Henry L. Hargrove of Baylor University read the first paper on the program, namely, "The Preparation of Teachers of English by the University." He was followed by Professor H. W. Morelock of the West Texas Normal College, with a paper on "The Preparation of Teachers of English by the Normal School." This topic brought forth some lively discussion, the principal contention being that the normal schools should not attempt to prepare special teachers of English for the better class of high schools. Principal B. F. Keith of the Belton High School discussed "Some Problems of the High-School Teacher of English and How to Meet Them." At the conclusion of Mr. Keith's paper the old question of how to lessen the burden of reading themes was threshed out pro and con. Mrs. Mary Pascal of the Fort Worth High School followed with a decidedly interesting paper on "The Special Teacher of English in the Grammar Grades." The chairman for the year then read a paper on "Some Suggestions for Further Culture and Professional Training for the English Teacher."

There were in attendance over one hundred teachers and the interest manifested was highly encouraging. Dr. Henry L. Hargrove of Baylor University, Waco, was elected chairman for the ensuing year.

L. W. PAYNE, JR.

AUSTIN, TEX.

TO CERTIFY OR NOT TO CERTIFY

For several years the high-school teachers of New York have been waging determined warfare in the cause of freedom from college domination. Their pamphlet on the *Articulation of School and College* has aroused considerable interest and provoked warm discussion. Recently the English section of the state teachers' association has issued an open letter, in which the disadvantages of the present system of college-entrance requirements and examinations are set forth and specifications

for entrance requirements and examinations of a better type are offered. The letter is as follows:

AN OPEN LETTER TO TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

I. OBJECTIONS TO THE PRESENT REQUIREMENTS

While we recognize that a great deal has been accomplished by the modern movement toward uniformity in English in the twenty years during which it has been put to the test, we realize at the same time that it has developed such limitations that a step forward is imperatively needed.

We feel that the type of entrance requirement and the type of entrance examination, which are based upon a closed list of books, however comprehensive, are harmful in many ways. For a closed list, when it becomes the basis of examinations, is subject to limitation by school systems, individual schools, and private teachers to a few books which are treated in such a way as to defeat the ends of literary culture. The few books are read in an unnatural manner. Not only is there failure to develop the kind of appreciation sought for by writers of books, but there is engendered an actual distaste for literary masterpieces and a too narrow conception of the bearing of literature upon life, particularly through the exclusion of contemporary literature which interprets to students the life of their own time.

This restriction has produced too many teachers who have settled down to routine drill on a few books. The result is stereotyped and lifeless treatment of books, and therefore a lowering of the status of the teacher of English.

The close study of books defeats the larger purposes of the teacher of composition by monopolizing too much time for literature, by unduly restricting composition topics to subjects connected with texts, and by failing to utilize the priceless opportunity of dealing at first hand with the vital problems which lie directly within the experience of pupils, or which contribute directly to their future well-being.

As a direct consequence of this intensive and routine method of treatment, the schools have been swamped by over-annotated editions of a few of the most used texts in the prescribed lists, to the exclusion of a wide range of inexpensive books covering the whole field of English literature.

II. WHAT THE AIMS OF THE REQUIREMENTS SHOULD BE

The dominant aims of constructive English work should be, in the opinion of your committee, of three kinds: linguistic, cultural, and ethical.

A. First, school courses should give pupils a workmanlike command of the tools of language for whatsoever purpose they may need to be used. This aim is fundamental and vital because upon it is based the power to gain a livelihood and to become social beings.

B. The second class of motives should be those of literary culture, a culture which should include, besides the study of classic forms, the attempt to stand-

ardize the taste of the pupils in regard to the theater, fiction, song, and periodic literature, the prevailing contemporary forms of culture and amusement.

C. The third group of aims should be ethical, for through English it should be possible to form correct habits of thought and to cultivate judgment, to present ideals of conduct and character, and to develop the sense of relationship to society in the present and the past.

III. THE FORM OF COLLEGE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

The basis of college and state examinations that would best afford the means of developing the three types of aims set forth above would be, in our opinion, these:

A. An *open list* of one or two hundred *recommended* books, both classical and contemporary, which would afford a familiarity with each of the great literary types. This list should include lyric poems of various types, narrative poetry (ballads and longer poems), epic poetry, the short story, the novel, biography, travel, adventure, the essay, the oration, and the drama. The requirements should therefore involve some breadth of reading, some variety of reading, and some evidence of judicious intensive reading. The schools should, moreover, be urged to offer proper opportunity to relate the standards acquired in reading the classics to contemporary writing in newspaper, magazine, fiction, theater, and popular song.

B. The requirements in written and oral composition should be such as to compel the student to think clearly and to express himself clearly on all subjects on which it is needful or desirable for him to think or to express himself. Such a range of subjects would include:

1. Personal themes, through which teachers may reach the individual pupil and give dignity and meaning to his interests. Such themes might deal with taste in amusements, vocational tendencies, personal experiences, friendships, etc.

2. School themes, through which the great mass of written and spoken English in other subjects in the curriculum and in the student's activities shall fall into relation as part of his English expression: notebooks and reports in other subjects, notices of school activities, the school journal, school songs, discussions and debates on school problems, and school entertainments, should become an integral part of the English work.

3. Community themes, through which the pupil may come into contact with social interests, studies of noteworthy features of city, town, or government, and of public happenings and movements. Such subjects might often be stimulated by prizes given outside the school.

4. Literary themes, through which the pupil's taste may be developed: subjects taken from books read in and out of school, from drama, vaudeville, moving picture, and newspaper; imitative writing by which insight is gained into literary craftsmanship, including verse as well as prose; simple dramatiza-

tions of stories read by the entire class; letter writing, social and business, made as real as possible.

IV. THE REQUIREMENT IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

That is, in such technical subjects as grammar, spelling, punctuation, use of the dictionary, derivation of words and the like, while aiming at a high ideal, should call for only such a grade of attainment as is commensurate with the age and ability of graduates of secondary schools.

V. THE REQUIREMENT IN ORAL EXPRESSION

Should call for time spent in high school that will ensure the ability on the part of the high-school graduate—

A. To read at sight a prose or a poetical passage of reasonable difficulty with accuracy and effectiveness, and

B. To talk intelligently and in good English for a few minutes on some simple, assigned topic.

ELLEN E. GARRIGUES, *President*

EDWIN FAIRLEY, *Secretary*

EDWARD J. BAILEY

E. R. CLARK

PERCIVAL CHUBB

ADAH H. FOX

THEODORE C. MITCHILL

Executive Committee

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION OF ENGLISH TEACHERS AT ITS MEETING IN TEACHERS COLLEGE, DECEMBER, 1909

I. This association affirms its conviction that any requirements for college or for the granting of the Regents Academic Diploma should be such as to lead to the best preparation for graduation from high school.

II. The requirement in English for graduation from high school, for entrance to college, and for the Academic Diploma, should consist of the following tests:

1. A test of the pupil's power of written expression by one or more compositions on subjects suggested by the personal experience or the general information of the candidate.

2. A test of the range and quality of the reading of the pupil and of his power of literary appreciation by means of: *a*) The answering of a number of simple suggestive questions on standard texts not previously prescribed; *b*) The explanation of two out of three or four passages of prose or poetry of ordinary difficulty, selected from books not to be previously prescribed.

3. A test of the candidate's power of oral expression by reading aloud and conversing.

These resolutions were presented, it will be remembered, to the National Council of Teachers of English in December, 1911,¹ and were referred to the Board of Directors for modification. The following substitute resolution has been submitted to the Board, with the results indicated below.

Resolved: (1) That the Council draw the attention of examiners in English to the protest of the New York State Association of English Teachers, adopted at its meeting of December, 1909, and embodied in a pamphlet entitled *An Open Letter to Teachers of English*; (2) That it is the sense of the Council that if examinations in English for admission to college are to be held at all, the tests suggested in this circular will obviate many of the present evils; (3) That the ends desired by the New York State Association can be attained most simply and directly by the general adoption of a system of certification.

MR. AITON: "I am in hearty sympathy with the proposed resolution. The resolutions offered by Mr. Clarke suggest a vast improvement upon the practice of the regents' and other eastern examinations, but I am glad to have the Central West take a position in favor of certification."

MISS BARBOUR: "I heartily approve of the resolution."

MR. BASSETT: "I approve."

MISS BRECK: "I approve unreservedly of the substitute resolution."

PROFESSOR CLAPP: "I approve the resolution."

PROFESSOR COX: "I am in favor of the resolution. We have a system of certification in West Virginia."

MR. COULTER: "I do not see any objection to the revised resolution. I think, if I were writing it, I should substitute for the words, 'tests suggested in this circular,' the words, 'tests similar to those suggested in this circular.'"

MISS DARLING: "I approve the resolution."

MR. DOREY: "I saw the New York resolutions some time ago, approve of their stand, and, in consequence of the proposed resolution."

PROFESSOR GREENOUGH: "I vote affirmatively on 1 and 2 and negatively on 3. I beg to call attention to the fact that the Harvard entrance examination in English under the new plan embodies all of the suggestions of the New York State Association of Teachers except the test of oral composition. That test I favor and hope ultimately to establish."

PROFESSOR HOPKINS: "Resolution approved."

MR. HUNTING: "I much prefer the amended form of the resolution. I wish to lend all my influence to that form of organized recognition of

¹ See the *English Journal* for January, 1912, pp. 36 and 37.

high-school work which is free from the cramming tendency, cramming to meet certain restricted requirements rather than vital development of power to do the advanced work of the college or that of practical life. If there is to be any examination for entrance to college let it be of the form suggested."

MRS. HULST: "I approve."

MR. LYNCH: "I have no objection to the resolution. I believe a few masterpieces should be studied by the pupils in all high schools, and if there are examinations some questions should relate directly to what the pupils have studied. I am entirely in favor of the certificate system of admission to college."

MR. McCOMB: "I do approve of the resolution, provided the emphasis is placed squarely on part 3, certification."

MR. MILLER: "Yes, emphatically."

MR. MITCHILL: "I approve of 1 and 2. I should approve of 3 if it were made to read '*partial* certification.' I still have some doubts about full certification."

PROFESSOR MOTTON: "I approve the resolution."

PROFESSOR NEAL: "Upon division 1 of the resolution I vote emphatically yes. Upon division 2, yes, strongly urging a modification in the wording that will be less suggestive of a campaign against examinations. In division 3 I would insert the phrase 'when local conditions permit,' so that the resolution shall bring our New England section less immediately face to face with the certification proposal. Without such modification I prefer to be recorded as voting no on the third division. Those in the West do not realize, perhaps, the extreme difference there is between their highly developed scheme of state education and the more individualistic scheme of the New England states. It would be one of the worst things that could happen for the New England colleges if certification were to be put into general practice without a considerable period of preparation. We have little or no state supervision; we have no centralized inspection, no visitors. With unrestricted certification, the colleges for some years would be overrun with ambitious and unprepared students. If the high schools are given the opportunity to work freely, they can turn out men qualified to face any examination of the sort described in the open letter. On the other hand, the colleges should be under no compulsion to receive men without subjecting them to a reasonable test of efficiency from the viewpoint of the particular college, with the open-letter plan of requirements as a basis."

MISS PEAKE: "I very thoroughly agree with parts 1 and 2 of the

resolution. Theoretically I agree with part 3 and believe it would work well in our larger high schools, but the others, I fear, are not yet ready for such a measure."

MR. PITTENGER: "I approve."

PROFESSOR SCOTT: "The resolution expresses my sentiments exactly."

MR. POWERS: "I am in favor of this resolution."

PROFESSOR SQUIRES: "The resolution has my approval."

British teachers of English are struggling with the same problems which trouble us in America. The subject of discussion at the annual conference of the English Association, which was held at University College, London, January 12 and 13, was "The Teaching of English Composition in Schools." Mr. F. S. Boas, divisional inspector, who presided, said that there is general agreement (1) that the term "composition" must be interpreted in the broadest possible sense so as to include oral as well as written composition, and that it must be considered in relation to all other allied forms of self-expression—artistic, manual, etc.; (2) that composition is in some respects the most important branch of the English curriculum; and (3) that it is the most difficult of all branches of English teaching. Miss E. A. Ford of Clapham Day Training College deplored the fact that the average boy or girl on leaving school cannot write English. She suggested that the literature lessons may be made more effective in developing the power of expression. Dr. Rouse of Perse School, Cambridge, declared that English composition is the foundation for all other work. Mr. George Sampson emphasized the point that oral composition should be regarded as more than a preparation for writing. In the discussion Dr. Rouse remarked that public examinations were regarded by all the teachers with whom he talked as the chief hindrance to advancement.

Editors of educational journals will feel grateful to Professor Judd for his frank statement concerning educational articles which appears in the *Elementary School Teacher* for February. He points out that there is educational experience of the greatest value going to waste all over the country because teachers and school officers are unable or unwilling to report their doings. Discussions should be impersonal and scientific; they should be definite and concrete; the setting for exercises and devices

should be provided; and there should be "a general desire to build up a professional educational literature of a high type." Statements of facts, setting forth difficulties as well as favoring conditions, "should be made the basis of suggestions for new investigations which may carry forward in the spirit of practical application the experience already accumulated."

Request has been made for the appointment of the following committees of the National Council of Teachers of English, to report at the next meeting or as soon thereafter as possible: (1) On Grammatical Terminology; (2) on Home Reading of High-School Students; (3) on Types of Organization of the High-School English Course; (4) on Equipment for English Work; (5) on the articulation of the High-School Course in English with the Elementary Course; (6) on the Opinions of High-School and College Graduates as to the Efficiency of Their Training in English; (7) on Pedagogical Investigation with Reference to English.

English teachers, particularly high-school teachers of English should read the article by Percival Chubb on "The Menace of Pedantry in the Teaching of English," which appeared in the *School Review* for January. He attributes much ill success in English instruction to the false assumption that "the discipline of the young in the vernacular should follow the lines of the traditional discipline in the classic languages." This led to the writing of English grammars on classic models and rhetorics with elaborate classifications and terminology. It caused also a "failure to recognize that education in the vernacular must be fundamentally a culture of the ear and the tongue." We must escape, says the writer, from the trammels of academic pedantry and make of English the vital, formative, ethical force which it ought to be.

The March number of the *School Review* will contain an important article on college-entrance requirements by Dean Angell of the University of Chicago.

The program for the annual meeting of the English section of the Michigan Schoolmasters' Club, which will be held at Ann Arbor on Friday, March 29, will be as follows:

"The Novel in the High School." Mr. Benjamin Comfort, Principal of the Case Technical High School, Detroit, Mich., and author of the great historical novel, *Arnold's Tempter*.

"The Drama League of America." Mrs. A. Starr Best of Evanston, Ill. Mrs. Best is president of the league.

"Our Overworked English Teachers." Professor E. M. Hopkins of the University of Kansas.

"The High School and the College: Their Relations as regards English." Professor James F. Hosic of the Chicago Teachers College, chairman of the National Education Association Committee on College Entrance Requirements in English.

The Chicago Theater Society is meeting with encouraging success in its efforts "for the support of the drama in Chicago and the encouragement of dramatic authorship in America." A hundred men and women have united in guaranteeing the expenses of the season's activities and have engaged the Drama Players to give a series of ten plays in as many weeks. The company has had a very successful season in New York and is being very well received in Chicago.

The repertory is as follows: *The Thunderbolt*, by Pinero; *The Lady from the Sea*, by Ibsen; *The Learned Ladies*, by Molière; *The Voysey Inheritance*, by Granville Barker; *The Passing of the Torch*, by Hervieu; *The Stronger*, by Giacosa; *The Coffee House*, by Goldoni; *The Maternal Instinct*, by Robert Herrick and Harrison Rhodes; *Gold*, by Ancella Hunter; and another new American play, not yet announced.

The Illinois, New England, New York, and Indiana associations are co-operating in the attempt to learn from high-school graduates in what respects their English training has proved inadequate. If others are willing to assist, let them make it known to the secretary of the National Council.

The Springfield (Mass.) *Union* will publish in its Sunday edition industrial news supplied by the class in journalism in the Massachusetts Agricultural College. The material will be drawn largely from industrial aspects of rural life.

All subscriptions to the *English Journal* should begin with the January, 1912, number. Copies of this and the following number have been reserved to meet the demands of those who might, for any reason, be late in ordering.